Bristol. November — 1851

My dear Miss Weston.

My promise to call upon Mr. Brown & ask him what his views & feelings were with regard to his position & experience in the past part of his life, did not escape my recollection. A ~~[illegible]~~ short time since I went to his house, & had a long & pleasant chat with him. I told him the interest you all felt in his history & scientific efforts, & your desire to know ~~wh~~ how he regarded them. I carefully avoided any leading questions, & he had no idea what was the view taken of him by any one of us. I longed for you to have been with me, both to have seen, & heard him. In his simple manner, standing & looking down upon the table, he said, "I always felt that Providence had allotted for me that position which was best for me, & in ~~in~~ where which I had a sphere of usefulness ~~[illegible]~~ I endeavoured to ~~fill~~ perform my duty. I always met with those in my own class to whom I was able to afford assistance in the acquirement of knowledge. If I was in great want of some particular book, I then wished I had money, but not at other times. To make Microscopes myself, overcoming all the difficulties, was a source of great delight: if I had possessed money, I might not have purchased them; & I should never have known about them as I now do. Many who have expensive instruments know less about them than I do. I do not think it is vanity to say this; it is true: I have had to study all their ins & outs, & so must thoroughly understand them

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I suppose there are few people who have passed so happy a life as I have. To be sure I have worked hard, — very hard, but God gave me a good constitution which I have never injured, & I could stand work.

Look at that book (taking down Loudon's Botanical Dictionary) no one could suppose the delight I feel on seeing it. It cost me 3 years of labour to get it. After working at my trade for 15 hours in the day, I laboured on an extra hour, or hour & a half, for 3 years & thus got money to purchase Loudon. I never felt my situation a hard one, or thought that others, taking ~~in~~ all things into account, were better off than myself. Wherever there is Society, there necessarily must be different classes: it wd be like complaining of the appointments of Providence to be dissatisfied with the lot ~~appointed~~ marked out for me."

Thus far I wrote down after my visit to Mr. Brown: he said a great deal more in the same beautiful spirit, & simple manner. He did not make any remarks that enabled me to judge of the nature of his dogmatic theology: I think if he had held any of the ordinary orthodox views, they would have come out in the course of our conversation. Some time, perhaps, I may find a favorable occasion for inquiring, being a little curious on the point. I felt sorry no one was with me to hear Mr. Brown's impressive lecture: I left him under as deep a sense of respect for his religious, as for his Natural Philosophy, — I left him, strengthened, animated, & encouraged in my own convictions of truth & duty.

Did I not know that Mary had done her duty in keeping you informed upon our A. S. movements, I could not have summoned courage, in the midst of so many unanswered letters as I have, to write to you yet. We continue to do our best, & sometimes feel a little overwhelmed with what we are doing, & what there is to do.. My health is very good (for me) but I can only keep it so by a system of perpetual self-denial in avoiding writing letters which I wish to write, which I feel competent to write, but which a giddy head & intermitting heart soon tell me I must postpone, if not omit alto=gether. ~~I could write~~ How I long now to ~~write~~ place upon paper & the capital letters I have mentally indited to your sister Anne, to Mr. S May, Mr. Grant, &c, &c. I have had various little troubles lately. An indisposed brother, with his son attending on him, has been with me for the last week.. I have had much work, & long Paris correspondence with, & about my Charenton friend Lane. His mother has become quite deranged, has squandered, lost, or been robbed of, her money; has left her son's payment for his board &c at Charenton 15 months in arrear: Mrs Lane is separated from a wealthy husband, who if he knew of her situation would take possession of what little property she has & turn her into the streets. Poor

ourage in doing our convictions of truth & duty.

Lane is pining to come & nurse & comfort his afflicted Mother: he wd ~~probably~~ perhaps, if here become quite mad himself, & ~~than wd~~ thus sadly complicate affairs: ~~if here~~, & yet he is naturally displeased with me for discouraging his coming to Bristol. It has never been my fate in the various difficulties under which I have been called upon to assist friends, to be able to please *all* parties

Satʸ Dec: 6. When I shall be able to finish this I know not: it is very difficult to find time to write. Since I last took up my pen to go on with it, one of the clouds so long impending has burst over France — at Paris especially. I go to read the papers as a matter of curiosity, but with little interest as to *what is to come next*, excepting in so far as human life is hazarded, & the worst passions brought into play. L. Nap. is a *daring* fellow enough, but there, in my estimation, his *virtues* end: his love of liberty is, I believe concentrated in himself. If lives must be lost, I should think his fitter to go. I think him good enough for the French, & they *bad* enough to be ruled by him. I hope *you* are all free from any special alarm? Would that we could know if Emma be with you: if away, she must be very unhappy.

We hear in Bristol at 1 p.m., what occurs in Paris at 7 p.m. on the preceding day: to day's report is of restored quietness: may it be true!

I ordered a *Mercury* to be sent to you this morning: It will amuse you, — & so will the *B. Times*. Our friend L. Mathews turns out *genuine ore* after all.

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2nd) As Mr. Thompson feared he was a snake, I have watched him carefully, & have for some weeks wished there were more such "snakes" amongst us, just as I have long desired there should be more such "infidels" in the world as W. L. Garrison. I am not only satisfied with L. M's thorough honesty, but with the valuable service he is doing the cause. He is finding out that the "religious world" here is doing harm to the A.S. cause, and that they are just as displeased with him for "driving off" the Christian portion of the professed A.S. people, as they are with the "Infidels" of the Am. A.S. Soc. I have often told him he will meet with no true sympathy but from the latter.

We have excellent accounts from, & of, the Crafts: W. Craft has written me an almost copper-plate letter. Mrs. Jenner & Miss Lushington write in the highest terms of Ellen & her husband.

Robt. Charleton & his friends desert Mathews, & disapprove of our Meeting: it was more in our favour than the papers represent: my sayings are sadly curtailed, but that is no matter. Neild stood firm, after a little coaxing: he was backed by a thorough John Bull "friend" Josiah Hunt. Mr. Davis then utterly disgraced himself, & I am sorry for Mrs. Chapman's friend Verry—

Mr. Lane has come hither after all, & I am in daily communication with him: I trust he will keep well: he has promised to returned to Charenton after a month's absence. The Directors laid him many & taken all responsibility off advising him to come to come to Bristol, ~~the [illegible] are [illegible] at his board~~ ~~[illegible] having expected it today~~. If he goes back we will write by him, & he shall call on you –

A letter has come from Mrs Mitchell to night, which informs us of Emma's being with you! I have always been doubtful of Mrs M's screwing up her courage to go to Paris & further but have not ventured to say so: now, she has a reasonable excuse –

We have heard that Mr Davis, your old antagonist, was escorted home last Wedy from the Meeting by a deacon on each side, & about 40 of his congregation to protect him! He paid me two visits previously to the Meeting.

I have not had much comm with Mr Grant lately but write now, & then to keep him _up to the mark_.

Mrs & Miss Ames were much pleased to have a peep at Emma: they are now at home: Miss A's eye is getting better. We are anxious to hear about you, but do not ask you to write: you must have much to do in that way. I am always charitably disposed towards my correspondents – not exigent: – (_Emma_ however excepted!) Still I send my love to her & to Mrs Chapman, & to Lizzie & Annie. I have never yet brought myself to realize that you are all out of the house, & _do not mean to do so_. Mary & Mr Webb continue an unremitting correspondence. Oh could you but see Russell Carpenter's letters to the Chn Reformer! They are in a pamphlet, & might almost be called "a Plea for _Slaveholders_". The Carpenters at the late Meeting are no relations of our friends. – I had a letter from my "_friend_" (which I long to answer) dated Novr & one from Mr May – Mary's kindest love. Affectly Yours

J. B. Estlin

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